1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

844 Of old everyone knew if a boy was born because the ladies sang a song
533 called *thongge* (*thongge* is a bird that sits on a stone and cries *u, u*).

[534]

Ko thongge ni sa roaroa.[10]	*Thongge* when it is morning flies
E vuka mai ka mai toka	hither and perches: its voice
Mai tekuru toka a ndomoi.a,	cooes, then drops and hums
Ka lutu ka ndengu: "*mm*";	"Mm," and the *thongge* laughs:
Ka ndrendre a thongge: 'e i ai i'.	"*E i ai i.*"

There is no song for a girl. Nowadays there is no joking (*vakatasuasua*) at birth.

846 Both the mother and the child are rubbed with oil and turmeric powder that "the milk may smell it and be plentiful." Oiling the mother is no longer practiced, and so *kulakula*, a disease in which the skin turns red, is common. Candlenut is pressed on the child's lips to make it vomit, that the evil thing may come out which was in its inside when it was born,
853 that it may be clean. It is fed with coconut juice: the coconut is baked, chewed, and the juice spat on to a clean piece of bark cloth and given to the child to suck. If the child wants to vomit they rub its lips with a China banana to make it vomit outright. When the mother has milk they set aside the coconut.

846 When the news is known ladies come in numbers to stay with the mother ten to twenty nights. This assembly is called *songone*. The father has to provide food for them daily.

At some time, it is not clear when, the father comes to kiss his child and rejoice over it. If the mother be a lady, bark cloth and as much as twenty or thirty mats are brought for her to lie upon. Of the two sides, father's and mother's, one provides the couch for the mother, the other for the child. On the day of the birth (occasionally a day or two after) both sides provide a big feast which is taken to the house where the mother is lying in. The assembly of women has the disposal of the feast. The father also makes a raw feast called *mba*, taro stems. Formerly they carried the baskets slung on muskets; nowadays on spades; these are called "the carrying sticks of the taro stems" and were given with the taro to the mother's side.

After four nights the women go to fish "to make free the nursing mother." Until that time all food from the sea is forbidden (p. 163). A big feast is then prepared called *isilisili ndravu*, which means "to wash away the ashes," or to "wash in ashes." The two sides hold a potlatch in which each side takes its gifts to the house of the other. This is called "dragging backwards and forwards" (*veiyarayaki*). Whatever the number of gifts brought from one side, the other will bring an equal amount.

[10] The word *roaroa* is not Lauan.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

843 of a *taiwaiwai* woman among the fishers. The woman must not cut her hair lest her strength be sapped. After one hundred days the woman is no longer a source of danger, and is in a state called *kunekune*. Her hair is cut for the first time since she has become pregnant, she bathes in the sea, and takes part in the communal net fishing for the feast which is provided by the relatives of the expectant couple. After fishing, the pregnant woman is rubbed with oil and dressed in her best kilt.

[184] On Fulanga no ceremony is held at the beginning of a first pregnancy, but the *i vaka votu ni ngone* is held after the first one hundred days of the first pregnancy of a married woman. It marks the woman's change of status to *kunekune*. The *vaka votu* ceremonies are held only for a woman's first pregnancy to mark the conception of her *ulu matua* (first-born), but the tabus are observed for all pregnancies.

Both parents observe certain tabus throughout the pregnancy to protect the foetus from harm and insure its growth. They abstain from eating any kind of fish which has been cut into pieces before being cooked, lest the child be born with a disease called *manaka na ika tava*. They must also abstain from eating the following sea foods: *vethu, kai ndawa, tuvu, lailai vai, yalewa matua, ndambe, ulumburu,* and *lolo* (sea eel) lest the foetus be injured.

CHILDBIRTH [5]

844 On the day of birth and for two or three days after birth the mother and child are visited by relatives from the mother's and father's clans. The relatives bring small gifts of roasted ripe coconuts and mats, tapa, or oil. The gifts are presented without ceremony and are received by the paternal grandmother. They are kept by the child's parents.

For at least four nights after the birth a group of five to ten female relatives from both the father's and the mother's sides sleep in the house with the mother and child. This group is called the *songone* or *tonitoni*. When Makarete of Saumua clan, Tokalau, gave birth to a child, the *songone* consisted of the child's maternal grandmother, the maternal aunt, the paternal grandfather's sister, the paternal granduncle's daughter, the paternal aunt, and the paternal uncle's daughter. The child's father must feed the *songone* which stays from four to ten nights depending on his resources.

846 852 On the fourth day after birth a ceremony called *i silisili ndravu* or *vakambongiva* is held. The young mother bathes in the sea for the first time since the birth. She is accompanied by her own mother or other near relatives. The *songone* go fishing to secure sea food for a small feast provided for them by the father. On this day the midwife, if she is not a close relative, is presented with property such as tapa or mats. The tapa in which the newborn infant was wrapped at birth is removed for the first time, and the child is

[5] For details concerning childbirth in Lau, see 23, pp. 27-32.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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given a steam bath in the house. In a special oblong wooden bathing bowl (*kumete ni silisili*) are placed cut *waro* leaves. A hot stone is put on the leaves and the infant is held over the steam by one of the *songone*. When the leaves cease to give forth steam, the child is washed in water. This bath is to clean and heal the navel. No men are allowed in the house during the process.

The most important birth feast is the *i mburua ni ngone*, which is usually held on the first or second day after the birth of any child. It may, however, be held on any day up to the tenth. This feast for a first-born, whether boy or girl, is larger and more elaborate than that for a subsequent child. The earth ovens of the father's and the mother's clans are used, but for subsequent children only the oven of the father's clan. If the family is prominent, the birth feast is large and attended by the whole village, if not the feast is attended by near relatives only. The birth feast of a child born out of wedlock is small. It is provided and attended by the mother's clan only.

Twins are desirable in Lau. Twin boys are called *ndrua tamata*; twin girls, *ndrua alewa*.

If a child is stillborn (*suthu mate*) the body is kept near the mother for three or four nights, for it would be harmful to the mother to take it away sooner. She would grieve and become ill with a sickness called *tandoka*, characterized by fainting, body pains, and sleeplessness. Stillbirths are buried in the cemetery above a previous burial from the same clan. The destiny of the souls of stillbirths is not clear to the natives. If both mother and child die they are wrapped in one funeral bundle and buried in the same grave. Their souls go to Nai Thimbathimba (p. 114). In miscarriage the foetus is kept two nights and then buried in the cemetery without ceremony.

When the child is born the father moves out of the house and sleeps in a men's house belonging to his clan until the child is weaned. Sexual intercourse with his wife is tabu during this period, but the father frequently has clandestine affairs with the women of the village who do not stand in the tabu relationship with him.

Feces of the infant are wrapped in tapa and kept in an excrement basket (*kato nda*) which hangs on the wall of the house where the child lives. This is done because they are a part of the child and removing them would cause the child to have diarrhea. For the first child the basket must be kept 100 days, after which the father throws it over the reef into the sea. The spot where it sinks is marked with a tabu stick. Nobody may fish there until the ceremony, called *mangitchi ni ona singa*, is held when the child is one year old. If the father erects a tabu stick he is obliged to give a big feast when the tabu is lifted. The feast adds to his prestige and to that of the child. If the parents cannot provide food for a big feast, they simply throw the basket into the sea without declaring a tabu. The excrement basket for a subsequent offspring need be kept only until the child shows he is gaining strength, usually two

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844 soon as the child is born the mother is given a second drink of medicine to bring forth the afterbirth. If it does not appear the mother's abdomen is pressed and the cord is pulled.

The newborn infant is held over a bowl of luke warm water and washed by the midwife or the grandmother. He is rubbed with powdered mangrove root. He is wrapped in white barkcloth so that only his face is exposed, and is held by the grandmother until he falls asleep. A child's bed, composed of a pile of baby mats and soft barkcloth, is prepared. Then the infant is placed "on the mat", that is, he is put on the pile.

846 After the delivery, while still sitting on the stone, the mother is washed with fresh water. Then she lies down on a new mat. She is rubbed with powdered mangrove root and covered with a sheet of barkcloth. She does not bathe in the sea for four days and remains quiet from five to ten days. She eats the roasted flesh of ripe coconut. The natives say she must not eat the flesh from the pointed end, however, because that flesh will poke into her stomach and cause pain. She drinks much coconut milk, but the pointed end of the nut must first be taken off, otherwise the baby will vomit. Also she must not eat salt.

853 Until the mother's milk appears the baby is usually fed roasted ripe coconut flesh. The flesh is chewed by the grandmother or the mother and spat into a piece of white barkcloth. The wad is dipped in warm water and given to the infant to suck. Babies are also fed the juice of sugar cane. Warm powdered mangrove root is applied to the breasts of a woman confined for the first time, to facilitate the flow of milk.

844 The afterbirth and cord are wrapped in the piece of barkcloth on which the birth took place, and buried by the husband or the midwife at the threshold of a door of the house. According to an old woman of Kambara, this is to give the child "good breath". A woman of Fulanga said it was so buried to be stepped upon but she did not know why.

000 If the child is born dead the body is kept near the mother

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If the child is born dead the body is kept near the mother for three or four nights. It would be harmful to the mother to take it way sooner. She would grieve and become ill with a sickness characterized by fainting, body pains, and sleeplessness. Still births are buried in the village cemetery above a previous burial from the same clan. If both mother and child die they are wrapped in one funeral bundle and buried in one grave. Formerly the natives believed that their souls went to Nai Thimbathimba, the jumping off place for the souls of the departed.

As a rule the father does not see the child before it is "on the mat". He usually bathes and puts on a clean *lavalava* before entering the house. The child is presented to him by his mother or by his wife's mother. He breathes upon him through his nose, the only native method of kissing, holds him for a moment, and returns him without a word.

For several months after the child is born the father sleeps in the men's house of his clan or in his father's house. Formerly he slept in another house until the child was weaned, and some men observe this custom today. Intercourse with his wife is tabu until the child is weaned, lest the child get a sickness called *ndambe* (pronounced en-dam'-bē), or the mother become pregnant. A man who breaks the tabu is called "expert at causing *ndambe*". A child with this illness cannot walk, but crawls on all fours with feet flat on the ground. If a woman becomes pregnant while she is nursing, people blame her husband because her milk will become "bad" and harm the suckling child. The tabu against intercourse is occasionally broken today, but apparently not often, for practically all children in any one family are at least 18 months apart. The husband is supposed to be continent during this period, but he usually has clandestine affairs with women who do not stand in the tabu relationship to him.

The child is named on the day of birth by the father's mother after a member, usually an ancestor, of the clan. If the parents are very fond of a child they give him several

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851 names, but all children have at least two names; a Lauan name
553 and a Lauanized biblical name. They receive the latter at a Christian baptism ceremony held in the mission church.

851 On the day of birth and for two or three days afterwards the
602 mother and child are visited by relatives from both the
431 mother's and the father's clan. The relatives bring small gifts consisting of roasted ripe coconuts, mats, barkcloth, and oil. The gifts are presented without ceremony, and are received by the paternal grandmother. They belong to the child's parents. This is one of a series of competitive affinal exchanges which begin with betrothal and continue throughout the marriage relationship in Lau. They serve to emphasize the relationship of the individual in a patrilineal descent group not only with his father's but also with his mother's clan.

● 846 For at least four nights after the birth, a group of five to ten female relatives from both the father's and mother's clans sleep in the house with the mother and child. Formerly the women stayed for ten nights, but the government has tried to discourage this custom on account of the drain on the economic resources of the child's father, so now they stay longer than four nights only if the child's father can feed them without straining his resources.

852 The most important birth feast is held on the first or second day after the birth. The birth feast of a first child, whether boy or girl, is larger and more elaborate than that for a subsequent child. The kin of both father and mother provide and prepare food for it, whereas only the father's kin do so for subsequent children. If the family is prominent, the birth [554] feast is large and attended by the whole village; if not, the feast is attended by near relatives only. The birth feast of a [848] child born out of wedlock is small. It is provided by the mother's kin only.

On the fourth day another ceremony is held. The mother bathes in the sea for the first time since the birth. She is

10:St. Johnston G-5 (no date) 1918
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173 [516] of a Western civilization, "that the Chief of Lakeba Island may not be called Tui Lakeba, or Lord of Lakeba, for that is the title of a god —but that is another story. I have it in my mind to tell you of this Rasolo, the son of Niumatawalu, High Chief of Lakeba, and of how he was driven for many years from island to island throughout the ocean, till at length he came back to his own people and to his rights as chief of the land. I often heard from my father, Wiliami Vuetesau, the tale of Rasolo's wanderings.

"Rasolo was even an exile when born, for his father Niumatawalu (being luckily away at Cakaudrove when the family of Qoma from Lakeba murdered old Delaivugalei, his father, at a Nayau feast) dared not return either to Nayau or Lakeba, but settled at Totoya Island. And it was there that Rasolo was born, his mother being Tarau, daughter of the Chief of Ketei town.

"And when in course of time Niumatawalu, with a fleet of canoes from Totoya, came back to Lakeba and defeated the followers of Qoma, he was *buli'd*[1] as *Sau*; and on his death his eldest son, Ului Lakeba, was likewise *buli'd* as *Sau*. Now Ului Lakeba had a young and beautiful wife named Tuisala, of whom he was very jealous. And one day Rasolo and some of [84C] his brothers went to the house of Ului Lakeba,

[1] Appointed or installed.

10:St. Johnston G-5 (no date)1918
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and Tuisala was seated there, spreading the *rerega*[1] on her young baby, as is our custom. And in jest she threw a little of the powder at Rasolo, and some stayed on his cheek. But Ului Lakeba entered the house just then, and saw this, and his anger grew hot within him, for he suspected Rasolo. And he straightway drove Rasolo and his brothers out of Lakeba, letting but one of them, Matawalu, remain—for Matawalu was then still a child.

"And Rasolo journeyed first to Totoya Island, and stayed there for some years, as his father had done before him; and there he took for a wife one Laufita, and they had a son—Malani—who was my grandfather.

"Now, after a time, a great desire to return to Nayau arose within him, so he hewed a tall Vesi tree at Dravuwalu town, and made a big canoe, and with all his people set sail for Nayau; but he was driven by the winds to Moala Island on the way. And after a few weeks there he journeyed on to Nayau, and great was the joy of the people to see him. And not very long after this Matawalu, now a young man, joined him; but he brought with him the report that the hatred of Ului Lakeba for Rasolo still remained.

"Now, at Maumi, the old fighting town on the top of the cliff at Nayau, there grew a

[1] Powdered turmeric.